

New UC Merced – UC Davis program will start bringing medical students to train in the Valley

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressmen Jim Costa and Dennis Cardoza announced a major step forward in their fight to establish a new medical school in the San Joaquin Valley. Costa joined with Cardoza and the Valley Coalition for UC Merced Medical School to unveil a new partnership between UC Merced and UC Davis to begin accepting students for the Fall of 2011. The UC Davis-UC Merced San Joaquin Valley PRIME program will start with six medical students who will receive the first two years of medical education at UC Davis then receive their clinical training at approved facilities in the Valley.

“Our hard work is paying off and a new medical school in the heart of our Valley is on its way,” said Costa. “Our region needs more doctors and this medical school is critical to providing the health care Valley families need. Momentum continues to build and I am ready for medical students to start training in our communities. I am proud to fight for this project alongside leaders like Congressman Cardoza and the entire Coalition, and I look forward to building on the progress we have made.”

Congressmen Costa and Cardoza have led the effort to bring a medical school to UC Merced and address the physician shortage in the San Joaquin Valley. In July, the two Representatives and the Coalition announced the report “Vision for the Valley.” The Coalition, a San Joaquin Valley wide organization comprised of over 1,000 community leaders, elected officials, physicians and others, published the 56-page report as a way to raise greater community awareness of the need for a medical school in the Valley and to elicit community input for its development. The report details the challenges of health care in the Valley, noting that the Valley has 51% fewer primary care physicians and 31% fewer specialists than the rest of the state.

The Coalition highlighted the importance of this new program and expressed their appreciation for the efforts of Congressman Costa.

“Today's announcement is so significant for the Valley,” said Bryn Forhan, Chair of the Coalition. “Next fall we will have the beginnings of a medical school where Valley students interested in pursuing medicine can get their education right here in the Valley. As Chair of the

Valley Coalition for UC Merced Medical School, I thank Congressman Costa for his persistence and determination in getting us this far and continuing to fight on behalf of the Valley."